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AUTHOR Sidener, Rosann P.
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that examined the efforts of one Dade County, Florida, high school to use site-based management/shared decision making (SBM/SDM) over a 7-year period. The study examined participants' beliefs about the distribution of authority, the nature of work, and conceptions of learning and compared those beliefs with the outcomes of the project. Data were collected through document analysis, observation, teacher surveys, and interviews with 38 individuals--council members, the principal and assistant principals, the guidance counselor, and district-level administrators. A conclusion is that restructuring requires a change in the organizational culture--a shift in the core beliefs and assumptions of an organization's members. Restructuring entails a shift to a flattened hierarchy, collaborative work patterns, and a view of learners as active constructors of knowledge. The high school's early successes and subsequent failures provide some lessons for districts and schools that plan to use SBM/SDM as a restructuring initiative: (1) clearly define new roles of participants at every level, including parents and students; (2) focus the principalship on the demonstration of facilitative leadership; (3) infuse the SBM philosophy throughout the district; (4) consider the process as a training ground for new facilitative leaders; (5) provide consistency over several years; (6) provide teachers with time and ongoing assistance; (7) build in a structural process for renewal; and (8) recognize the fine line between providing structure and encouraging participant ownership. Eight tables are included. The appendices contain survey results and figures of the restructuring model and organizational structure. (LMI)

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SITE-BASED MANAGEMENT/SHARED DECISION-MAKING:
A VIEW THROUGH THE LENS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Rosann P. Sidener
Dade County Public Schools

Paper presented at the
American Educational Research Association
Annual Meeting

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School-Based Management/Shared Decision-Making:

A view through the lens of organizational culture

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present the findings from an empirical investigation¹ of one school's efforts to use School-Based Management/Shared Decision-Making to restructure over a seven year period. The investigation focussed on the interrelationship between participation in SBM/SDM and the school culture. The school culture was characterized by describing participants' beliefs about the way authority is distributed; the way work is accomplished; and the role of the learner. The process and content of the school's restructuring was examined to see how participation in SBM/SDM affected participants' beliefs in these three areas.

There have been few systematic investigations of SBM/SDM (Cotton, 1992; David, 1989; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990a&b). This is due, in part, to the newness of many restructuring projects as well as the variety of forms that SBM/SDM assumes. School-based management/shared decision-making is, by nature, idiosyncratic to the local site and is inextricably intertwined with the culture at the individual school. This qualitative study followed the SBM/SDM process at an individual school site over a period of seven years, in an effort to illuminate how participation in a shared decision-making project molds core beliefs and changes school practice.

Educators' basic beliefs about how authority should be distributed, about the nature of work, and the way children and teachers learn influence all the outcomes of schooling.² The research endeavored to uncover the basic beliefs and assumptions of the SBM/SDM participants in each of these areas. It explored how the various participants define schooling and how those beliefs affect the process, content, and outcomes of the school's restructuring initiative. It also sought to determine how the involvement of the players in SBM/SDM affects basic beliefs about

¹ See Skidener (1994). This report is a distillation of findings presented in a doctoral dissertation completed under the auspices of Teachers College, Columbia University.

² The constructs of distributing authority, working, and knowing as a means of characterizing school culture are drawn from the work of Popkewitz, Tabachnik, and Wehlage (1982) in their evaluation of an earlier school reform effort, the Individually Guided Education program.

the distribution of power and about the meaning of work and of learning. Five research questions guided the collection of data:

1. What is the district context (i.e., policy, structural organization, impetus) for site-based management/shared decision-making?
2. How do participants define and conceptualize site-based management/shared decision-making?
3. What are participants' beliefs about the distribution of authority and how are they reflected in the SBM/SDM process and content?
4. What are participants' beliefs about how work should be accomplished and how are they reflected in the SBM/SDM process and content?
5. What are participants' beliefs about the role of the learner and how are they reflected in the SBM/SDM process and content?

Background: The context for SBM/SDM

The current manifestation of school-based management/shared decision-making initially began as a counter movement in reaction to the first wave³ of legislated school reforms that proliferated between 1983 and 1986. The publication of the unfavorable national report of the President's National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk (1984), initiated a flurry of reform efforts that emanated from state houses across the nation. These reforms, which were predominantly prescriptive in nature, focussed on "first order"⁴ changes. They increased, among other things, requirements for graduation, hours in the school day, routinization, regulation, and testing. Teachers felt they had more responsibility and less empowerment to do the work. The mass of regulations usurped the authority of teachers, parents, and local communities. At the same time, a growing body of research argued that the increased regulation had produced a web of inefficiency and underscored the need to move away from top-down regulation. Educators argued that they could not hope to "prepare students for the Information

³ School reform efforts during the 1980's are generally characterized as coming in "waves." The first wave consisted of mostly legislated mandates designed to increase student performance standards and requirements. The second wave evolved as a counter movement and was initiated by educators. See Futrell (1989) and Cuban (1988).

⁴ Cuban (1988) refers to first order and second order change. First order changes improve the efficiency and effectiveness of what is currently done. Second order changes alter basic organizational features, affecting goals, structures, and roles.

Age if they themselves are condemned to organizational structures derived from the Industrial Age" (Futrell, 1989, p. 11).

A second wave of efforts to improve schools began around 1986, fueled by several prestigious reports sponsored by groups such as the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, The Education Commission of the United States, The National Governor's Association, and The Holmes Group. They argued for restructuring schools to become more productive, more closely aligned with research, and more attuned to the technological and demographic changes in society. Local schools and communities became the focus. The reports recommended the professionalization of teaching to make schools better work places for teachers, and empowerment of local school staff and community members to make decisions concerning their educational program.

Underpinning the second wave of restructuring proposals are several assumptions about organizational effectiveness. The central premise is that positive change must come from within the school and that the formal adjustment of decision-making arrangements will alter the relationships (that is, the modes of interaction among staff, students, and parents) typically and traditionally found in school settings. The related premise is that by altering relationships, other benefits will follow. For example, it will enhance morale and motivation, strengthen the quality of the planning processes, release creativity in solving school problems, stimulate instructional innovations, and make schools more successful with their students (Ambrose, 1989; Glickman, 1992; Malen & Ogawa, 1992). In addition, involving teachers, parents, and sometimes students, provides them with ownership and makes them more accountable to each other (Barron, 1992; Bergman, 1992; Goldman, Dunlap, & Conley, 1993; Peterson, 1991). An added benefit is presumed to be that decisions are more enduring; as people realize their input is valued, they feel a new sense of commitment to the organization. The educational research base is inadequate at this time to support these assumptions.

SBM/SDM in Dade County, Florida

Dade County Public Schools is the fourth largest public school district in the nation, exceeded only by those in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago. There are 296 schools in operation (Dade County Public Schools, 1994). The system consists of elementary, middle, and high schools; vocational, adult, and community education centers; satellite schools and magnet schools; as well as various special schools and centers. The school district includes a large and

varied geographical area ranging from inner city to suburbs, vegetable farming areas to commercial districts, and wealthy to impoverished neighborhoods. The student enrollment in October, 1994 totalled 321,955 (Dade County Public Schools, 1994). It is one of 67 independent school districts in Florida, each with a locally elected school board.

The origins of SBM/SDM in Dade County trace back to Florida Governor Ruben Askew's 1973 Citizens' Committee on Education. This group recommended that SBM/SDM be implemented in all Florida schools, which stimulated a state-wide shift in interest toward school-based approaches to educational organization. The state legislature passed several bills that helped create a climate where the ideas of school autonomy and union-management cooperation could take root. The concept of school-based budgeting came in the Florida Education Finance Program, which made students, and not programs, the unit of funding. Following this, the School Board of Dade County developed a computerized school-based budgeting program which provided flexibility in developing the budget at the school level. The board steadily moved to devolve authority and responsibility to the school sites during the decade of the 1970's. They refused, however, a proposal for full implementation of SBM/SDM which was presented in 1975.

Also in the early 1970's, the state legislature passed a new law on collective bargaining for public employees. This led to the first labor contract in 1975 between the district and the teachers' union, which established several joint management-union task forces to deal with complex problems. The concept of SBM/SDM continued to evolve through the work of the joint task forces. Two precursors of SBM/SDM emerged from their work. Faculty councils intended to foster increased faculty participation in decision making were formed at each school site and a meritorious school program was initiated during the 1984-85 school year (Cistone, Fernandez, & Tornillo, 1989). Since that time, there has been an ongoing relationship between the teachers' union and the administration of the school district which has lent itself to collaborative efforts.

SBM/SDM Pilot in Dade County

Following the report of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) and other major reports calling for restructuring of schools (the so-called second wave of reform of the 1980's), the district began to reconsider the concept of SBM/SDM. The Professionalization of Teaching Task Force, co-chaired by the superintendent of schools and the executive vice president of the United Teachers of Dade, was formed in 1985. The report of this committee recommended to the school board that there be a pilot program in SBM/SDM for a small number

of schools. After review by separate committees of school principals and union stewards, and ratification of a collective bargaining agreement that reaffirmed commitment to the professionalization movement, all schools were invited to submit proposals for participation in a three-year SBM/SDM pilot program.

Some members of planning committee visited schools to answer questions about the pilot.

I went around to a lot of schools. Teachers were afraid for a number of reasons. Number one, they thought it would take up too much time. This has remained a problem. Number two, they didn't believe they were going to have the kind of say. Too many things have been tried over the years and dropped.... We didn't have the number we thought we'd have in the beginning, but we ended up with about fifty schools. (Interview 10, lines 1103-1113)

The pilot program goals included:

- an improved educational program for all students
- an increased focus of school district resources and shared decision-making at the school level
- greater flexibility and responsibility in budget development and management at the school level
- increased collegial planning, implementation, and evaluation of the instructional program
- increased teacher involvement in staff development activities, and
- increased opportunities for community, business, student, and parent participation. (Dreyfuss, 1988, p. 12)

In order for the individual school proposal to be submitted for consideration, at least two-thirds of the faculty had to support it. The proposal was to include a statement of intent and a shared decision-making model composed of school staff and parents. In addition, the school had to cite issues, practices, and procedures they intended to address and provide a rationale for doing so. Schools were asked to identify the legal or contractual arrangements that would need to be adjusted to implement their SBM/SDM proposal. Thirty-three schools were selected to participate commencing with the 1987-88 school year.

These schools were designated Pilot I schools. A support system was set up for the pilot schools.

When we first started, we took the [pilot] schools out of the structure in order to protect them, to give them a chance to develop, to give them a chance to nurture. (Interview 35, lines 283-287)

The schools were removed from the district line of authority, reporting directly to the newly formed Office of School-Based Management and to the district superintendent. A process for granting waivers from district, union and, in some cases, state rules was put into place. Teams from each

school were trained in the budget process, and conferences for professional development and the sharing of ideas were held in the spring and fall. A modest stipend was provided for staff development at the school site. Aside from these efforts, the schools were provided with few guidelines.

It was anticipated that the three-year pilot would expand each year to include about 100 schools by the 1989-90 school year (Cistone, Fernandez, & Tornillo, 1989). In reality, the pilot expanded rapidly and more than 200 schools were operating as SBM/SDM schools by that time. At the beginning of the 1989-90 school year, all SBM/SDM schools were returned to the control of the regional offices. The pilot officially ended that year, but no provision was made for schools to terminate their governance process. The schools continue to operate under the SBM/SDM models they developed for the pilot project.

Research Methods

This study examined the beliefs about the distribution of authority, the nature of work, and conceptions of learning held by participants in a school-based management/shared decision-making project, and compared those beliefs with the outcomes of the project. It is a qualitative case study of an SBM/SDM project from its inception in 1987 until 1994. Data collection activities spanned five months, from October 1993 until February, 1994. The researcher spent approximately two days a week in the school. Criterion-based selection was used to identify the school site. Criteria included the degree of commitment to the SBM/SDM program, the availability of data, a low faculty and principal turn-over rate, and length of involvement in SBM/SDM.

The study site met all of the criteria. It was one of the schools selected for the Pilot I SBM/SDM project in 1987, and subsequently gained national recognition for success in implementing SBM/SDM. It was given the pseudonym, Royal Palm Senior High School, for purposes of the study. The district completed an evaluation of the pilot program⁵ which includes both program aggregate and individual school reviews. This provided some baseline information and direction for the inquiry. A wealth of documented information was available at Royal Palm. A participant in the SBM/SDM process maintained files containing detailed minutes of the proceedings of every SDM council meeting since 1987. Notes taken at many other meetings and memos relating to SBM/SDM projects were also made available to the researcher. The

⁵ See Collins, R. and Hanson, M. (1991).

participants at the site were open and willing to participate in the study.

Royal Palm has a low faculty and principal turn-over rate. There was one change in principalship during the seven year study period. The faculty is comprised of veteran teachers. One teacher stated, "When you come to Royal Palm, you plan to retire here." The average number of years teaching experience ranged from 12 to 15 years. Although school culture is taught to new members (Schein, 1985), there is greater continuity in a school where the personnel remains stable.

Description of Data Sources

The sources of data were participants in SBM/SDM, archives and documents, observation at the school, key district level administrators, and the leader of the teachers' union. Information was derived through interviews, document analysis, survey, analysis of observation notes, and perusal of archival data.

Interviews comprised the primary method of inquiry. A semi-structured interview protocol was developed based on major findings from a review of the literature on school restructuring, and examination of documents and archival data at the district offices and school site. Thirty-eight people were interviewed, including (1) current and former members of the decision-making council at the school site⁶, (2) the principal, (3) guidance counselor, (4) assistant principals, and (5) persons in key positions at the district level. Interviews lasted from forty-five minutes to an hour and a half, were tape recorded and later transcribed.

The district used several survey instruments when evaluating the SBM/SDM pilot project. The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire was used to assess general school climate. Baseline data was available for three administrations of the Opinionnaire at Pilot I schools in 1987, 1988, and 1989. The researcher re-administered the Opinionnaire at the school study site in 1994, to gain information on the morale of the faculty at large.

Document analysis was used to track the outcomes of site-based management/shared decision-making at the school study site. Minutes and agendas of meetings gave concrete evidence of the decisions made and the processes followed. Document analysis made it possible to triangulate data gathered through interviews. The data collection instruments were carefully checked against the research question so each question was addressed through multiple sources.

⁶ See Appendix D for specific composition of the decision-making council.

Other indicators of SBM/SDM outcomes that fall under the rubric of knowing, working, and distributing authority were seen in archival records. These include staff development activities, enrollment trends for specific courses, and student grouping practices. The researcher observed meetings of the shared decision-making body, department head meetings and departmental meetings.

Data Analysis

The theory and guiding research questions provided the structure for data analysis. A data base for coding information was constructed using the techniques developed by Miles and Huberman (1984), and LeCompte and Preissle (1993).

The elements of restructuring gleaned from a review of the literature provided a starting point for describing the school's restructuring effort. Although the literature suggested a framework for data analysis, the data itself guided the analysis process. It became apparent that some strands of restructuring never arose in the school's SBM/SDM process while other unanticipated strands did emerge. The system of classification was tailored to suit the particular character of the restructuring initiative at the study site.

A task related to the teasing out of restructuring strands was the construction of a chronology of decisions. Minutes and other documents from the SBM/SDM process were studied to get a sense of the issues that were discussed and the nature of that discussion. This allowed the researcher to modify interview schedules so the responses captured how participants interpreted the discourse.

The data were searched for patterns that indicated shifts in practice as well as in beliefs. Archival data that are longitudinal, such as attendance rates, number and type of student referrals, and achievement scores were examined for changes and compared to narrative data about events and decisions.

Presentation of Data

The data are organized into five sections. A chronology of decisions and a description of the context provides information on the issues addressed by the shared decision-making council. This is followed by a discussion of participants' conceptions of SBM/SDM; and their beliefs about the distribution of authority, the way work should be accomplished, and the role of the learner.

Context and Content: The site council's work from 1987-1994

Royal Palm is a comprehensive senior high school which opened in 1958. The educational program includes an upward-reaching academic curriculum as well as business and vocational programs and a wide variety of art, drama and technology education courses. The student population is ethnically diverse. Forty-one percent is composed of minorities. The school is located in a predominantly middle class and upper middle class community. The daily attendance rate is high (yearly averages lie in the range of 94.1% to 95.1%). Eighty-nine percent of the senior class of 1993 planned to attend a two-year or four-year college. Students score well above state and national means on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. There is a long history of parental involvement at the school.

Royal Palm became a school-based management/shared decision-making school largely because the principal had previous experience working with advisory councils. After the request for proposals arrived at the school, information concerning the pilot opportunity was shared with other constituent groups in the school and community. The faculty council (an advisory group established by the 1975 contract), department heads, and administrators met to discuss the concept. The group expressed general support for the idea. In the spring of 1987, 73% of the faculty voted to apply for the pilot program in SBM/SDM.

A member of the faculty and a parent spearheaded the committee which designed the governance structure. It was decided that

The primary focus of the PAW Cadre will be to work in a shared decision mode with the principal in program planning and development, and the allocation of school resources. Also included for review would be school level policies and procedures, such as disciplinary policies, student attendance procedures, etc. (Royal Palm SBM/SDM Proposal, 1986, p. 4).

The SBM/SDM model incorporates representatives from various constituent groups into a

formalized structure designed to promote and facilitate the flow of ideas within and into the organization. Departments were folded into this model and new "task forces" were created to span across departments. The central decision-making body, the Cadre, includes representatives from every instructional department; cafeteria, custodial and clerical staff; parent and student groups; student activities; and the teachers' union. The shared decision-making structure is designed to provide access to all stakeholders in the school and community. The underlying philosophical principles of the structure are openness and inclusion.

The First Year

The decision-making council, dubbed the Cadre, met at least once weekly during the first year. Departmental and non-departmental task forces needed to be formed, leaders identified, a Cadre chairperson selected, roles defined, and goals set. The task was labor intensive, but many Cadre members were enthused about the possibilities and willing to invest the time and effort.

The groundwork was laid pretty well. We participated wholeheartedly and thoroughly.... We did it wholeheartedly with the invitation of the management. (Interview 2, lines 36-37 and 92-93)

All of the task forces were asked to assess the needs of the individual departments and of the school in general. These reports were presented at a spaghetti dinner in the school cafeteria, which was open to all members of faculty, staff, and community. A great volume of ideas was presented for consideration. Most of these centered around what Conley (1991) refers to as "renewal"—figuring out ways to make what is in place work better. Some examples include additional space for tutoring and storage, upgrading of equipment and facilities, and improving procedures for ordering texts and supplies. Others focused on items such as altering the curricular offerings, lowering class size, and improving communication with the junior high schools.

In retrospect, many respondents commented on their lack of readiness. Very little preparation or training was provided for participants on the shared decision-making council.

If we had had a model or somebody to look at. [If we could] say, "OK, we are not going to do this because this is what happened to them." If we had based our procedures on somebody else's experience and not have made the same mistakes.... It is a lot of work. Gruesome work.... The amount of work that there was in the beginning discouraged a lot of people from going on. (Interview 37, lines 601-612 and 595-597)

The Cadre simultaneously addressed a wide variety of issues. These included three

programs proposed in Royal Palm's application for the pilot program: the PAW Achievers, a program for students considered to be at-risk for dropping out of school; PAW Scholars, a program for high achieving students; and Peer Evaluation, a system for teachers to perform formal observations of their peers. The group also responded to results of the needs assessment. Open flow of communication to non-participants and access to the governance process were major concerns. Some participants felt that the wide open nature of the agenda was positive while others felt that time was wasted on matters of little consequence.

We would have been better off had we had goals, because what it would have given us is a structure that would have allowed us to avoid dealing with eight jillion peripheral issues before we were able to address the instructional issues. (Interview 36, lines 65-70)

We were concerned about the running of the school. The Cadre was working on things to survive; things that were important to them like blue slips (forms for reporting students who skip class) and attendance. (Interview 12, lines 425-429)

Another issue concerned the composition of the Cadre. The Cadre was composed of 15 department heads who represented faculty in their department plus representatives of staff and community groups. Department heads were selected and appointed by the principal. Six months after the school was functioning under SBM/SDM, School-Based Management (it is unclear if this term refers to the union, central administration, or a joint group) expressed concern that the shared decision-making group was comprised primarily of principal's appointees. They advised that the majority of the Cadre should be elected and directed the Cadre to address the problem and make recommendations. After "lengthy, heated discussion concerning pros and cons of all issues" (Royal Palm Cadre Minutes, March 1, 1988), an ad hoc committee was formed to draft a proposal. The proposal was rejected and redrafted several times. The final solution that the Cadre, and later the entire faculty, accepted was for the department members to elect the department heads. This decision represents what was probably the most fundamental organizational change made in the restructuring process.

The district removed SBM schools from the line of authority, away from the control of the regional offices. The superintendent and the union devoted a great deal of attention to the SBM/SDM project, and members of the shared decision-making council felt that they had the full support of the district administration. The principal worked to include all constituent groups in the SBM/SDM process.

Table 1
Summary of Discussion and Decisions Made in Year One

Major Theme	Description
Design mechanics of governance process	- establish communication process - accept Roberts Rules and voting procedure - create task forces - elect chairperson - define duties of members, task forces and chairs - adapt SDM structure to meet district demands
Define roles	- select issues to address - explore boundaries of decision-making power
Identify needs	- charge task forces with evaluating needs - organize spaghetti dinner to present findings
Set goals	- address needs assessment results
Implement programs in SBM/SDM proposal	- PAW Scholars - PAW Achievers - Peer Evaluators
Improve working conditions	- computerize attendance procedures - expedite student schedule changes - mediate faculty/clerical dispute - review building usage

The Second Year

The second year was marked by more spontaneous flow of ideas through the governance structure. Four priorities were set for the year: (1) improvement of the instructional program, (2) the strengthening of human resources (staff), (3) the strengthening of professionalism, and (4) the beautification of the physical plant. The shared decision-making structure was up and running. Goals were established, and as people became comfortable with the SDM process, they began to use the structure to present ideas and proposals.

The budget process began to function fully in the second year. The district trained a group from the school which included the principal, assistant principal, budget committee chairperson, and union steward. Entire Cadre meetings were devoted to training other participants in the school-based budgeting system. A faculty member was selected to chair the budget committee.

The budget was developed from the bottom up. Individual departments developed their budget requests collaboratively. Each department submitted a prioritized list of needs to the budget committee chairperson in advance of the budget meeting. The committee, which generally consisted of department heads and one or two additional people, then met and negotiated in order to develop a budget that a majority of the committee could recommend. The recommended budget was then taken to the Cadre for approval. It was not unusual for the Cadre to question the budget and send it back to the committee for further discussion and revision.

Most participants felt that the opening up of the budget process was one of the most positive outcomes of SBM/SDM.

The one thing I am most appreciative about is the budget.... We can share our ideas and decide who is going to take what.... We share our concern. People say, "O.K., this year I don't need as much, you can have more money than I." This is the one thing in our department that has really made a difference. We have a lot more books, materials and supplies than we ever did before. It was just a matter of talking to people and saying, "I need this." (Interview 37, lines 140-147)

The process of working out the budget led to greater collaboration among the departments. Some respondents felt that this was very beneficial while others were concerned that it politicized the budget process. Others viewed the budget process as a token gesture, because the administration opened only the materials and supply account to the budgeting process. Other accounts, such as staffing and discretionary funds, were not open for negotiation.

In addition to budget, the Cadre addressed two components of their original SBM/SDM proposal, peer evaluation and the election of department heads. Three teachers trained as peer evaluators began to function in that capacity. (The term peer evaluators may be misleading. These teachers completed official observations of peers, which were included in the principal's final evaluation of teacher performance.) Eight additional evaluators were selected for training in the observation process. The election process for department heads continued to be a concern as faculty in some departments questioned the fairness of the election process.

The group refined the governance structure. The duties of the Cadre chairperson were defined. It was decided to create five vice-chair positions to assist with the task of running the SBM/SDM process and to develop future leaders.

Communicating to all members of the faculty and access to the governance process were central concerns. A ten-minute open forum was set aside at the beginning of each Cadre meeting for any person to present ideas. The Vice-Chair for Communication was charged with

distributing minutes and agendas to Cadre members and the entire school staff and within 48 hours of every meeting.

Some viewed the open forum as a place to vent personal peeves, but many good ideas surfaced during this time. Concern expressed by an English teacher about racial discrimination grew into the Minority Affairs Liaison. The issue was referred to a task force, which collected data on minority involvement in the school. After studying the data, the task force presented a series of recommendations to the Cadre, including staff development to develop awareness of prejudice, adding elective classes in topics such as leadership development and critical thinking skills, and eliminating all references to stanine scores as criteria for course selection.

The Cadre established a position for a Resource Specialist for Minority Affairs. The specialist was a teacher given partial release time to develop support systems for minority students. A veteran Royal Palm teacher was selected for the position in May, 1989. Community meetings in the black neighborhood promoted parent understanding and involvement in scheduling, and all minority students with stanines of 6 or higher were counseled and hand-scheduled. Members of the faculty and administration wrote a grant to provide additional funding, which was awarded to the school the following year. Narrative and quantitative data show that this program improved relationships and increased minority enrollment in advanced courses (Appendix B).

The issue of student involvement in SBM/SDM also surfaced. The student representative to the Cadre suggested that a Student Advisory Committee be established. The Student Advisory Council was established to "solicit and communicate the opinions of students with regards to school-related matters" (Royal Palm Cadre Minutes, May 16, 1989). They requested to exempt students holding a 4.0 average in a course from taking a final exam (this was defeated); initiated a beautification project for the school grounds; organized student representation on the task forces; and proposed a student honor code and court.

The student role in shared decision-making presents a contradiction. First, the Cadre appears to listen carefully to student requests and give them serious consideration. In describing the SDM process, one teacher stated, "If I wanted to get something through SBM, I would definitely have a student present it" (Interview 19, lines 126-128). Paradoxically, teachers protect their turf.

Poor communication made it difficult for the student advisory committee to ensure student representation on the task forces. The student Cadre representative expressed frustration

because

The student advisory committee members feel there is a problem in trying to get more information on what is going on at the school...members of the committee would like to go into the mail room to check the calendar for meeting dates. A discussion arose on this issue since it is felt that students should not be going into the mail room. After many possible solutions were given, it was decided that [the Cadre chairperson] and [the student representative] will work this out somehow. (Royal Palm Cadre Minutes, February 13, 1990)

Eventually, student participation in most of the task forces fell off as students did not consistently receive advance information of the times and places of meetings.

Many suggestions were made to improve daily procedures for running the school and address working conditions. Software was acquired that generated individualized attendance bulletins for teachers, reducing the paperwork involved in checking for students who cut classes. Procedures for photocopying materials were also simplified. It was decided that commencing the following school year, Royal Palm would be a smoke-free school.

Issues were addressed in a professional manner and meetings could be described as business-like. There were still concerns about the elected status of department heads, but friction among staff was either worked out privately or began to subside as people communicated more frequently and openly. The volume of decisions (more than 100) was about the same as in the previous year, but the content shifted to include issues of student equity, student empowerment, budget, governance process and working conditions. Teachers were empowered to elect department heads, but most declined to exercise that authority and elected the same ones that had formerly been appointed by the principal. Other teachers began to function as peer observers, a new role for faculty members.

Table 2
Summary of Discussion and Decisions Made in Year Two

Major Theme	Description
Develop budget process	- define committee membership - include representation from all areas - instruct all Cadre members in school budget
Begin peer observation	- train three teachers - select eight additional teachers
Organize student advisory council	- act on student suggestion - include all segments of student body

Address minority concerns	- gather data on minority involvement - create minority affairs program
Elect department heads	- design procedure for elections
Refine governance process	- institute open forum - select vice chairs - provide pay supplement and additional planning time for Cadre chair
Improve work conditions	- streamline attendance procedures - declare smoke-free work environment - allocate \$50 for supplies per teacher

Year Three

As Royal Palm entered the third year of SBM/SDM, there was a growing sentiment among teachers that although many things had been accomplished through the shared governance process, it had not made an impact on teaching and learning. The incoming Cadre chairperson addressed the faculty in August.

There is one thing we haven't done. We haven't figured out a way to use SBM to do what we wanted to do in the first place. We haven't figured out a way to use it to significantly improve the quality of education we offer to our students. We've got to figure out a way to make a difference where it really counts--at the "bottom line"--in our classrooms.

Shared decision-making can look great and be a wonderful concept, but if we don't use it as a tool to positively affect students and teachers in the learning environment, it is a giant waste of time. (Speech presented by Cadre chairperson to faculty, August 1989, lines 48-75)

The Cadre responded to this challenge by organizing a Staff Improvement Network (SIN) Committee to provide in-service workshops for the staff to share ideas, talents, and techniques. A faculty newsletter, The SIN Sentinel, was established to facilitate staff communication and to provide a forum for advertising workshops and sharing ideas. A voluntary visitation program was developed that would allow teachers to observe their colleagues in action. In a final report, the SIN committee reported "limited success" with voluntary visitation. The formation of the Staff Improvement Network and the enthusiastic participation of some staff members may indicate that the culture of the school was beginning to change. A number of teachers were beginning to collaborate to improve instruction.

All of the task forces were asked to review the needs and goals they established during

the first year, report on progress, and revise the goals in light of the school-wide aim of improving instruction in every classroom. New goals included improving communication between school and parents, developing alternative teaching strategies, increasing the interaction between students and teachers, and refining courses by adding labs and student projects. Other departments expressed the need to revise the material fee collection process, address teacher work load, and provide textbooks for every student. In this area, as in the area of staff collaboration, the orientation is mixed. Some teachers considered issues that center on students, while others were concerned with issues that are important, but peripheral to the learning process.

A perception that not all members of the Cadre served willingly led to re-evaluation of the governance process. The SBM/SDM structure designated the department head as the representative to the Cadre. The faculty discussed the issue during a day-long series of meetings during planning periods. After much discussion, it was decided that the structure should not be changed, and that the Cadre chair and the principal be responsible for ensuring attendance at meetings. In addition, attendance at Cadre meetings was written into the official duties of department heads.

Representation continues to be a concern. Many respondents expressed belief that the structure closes access to membership on the Cadre and that it encourages stagnation.

The representation on the Cadre is something that needs to be addressed. There are people entrenched there who have been there forever. I haven't been seeing a lot of change in the governing body. (Interview 16, lines 467-470)

I'm told that I could lose my position as [department head] if I dropped out of the Cadre. That's the rule. A department head could lose the position if they fail to participate....Let me put in my five years and let somebody else put in their five years. We're seeing the same people year after year. We're doing all the work and the other people have no concept of what is being done and who, quite frankly, don't even care what is being done. (Interview 24, lines 349-357 and 482-499)

The governance process was dominated by teachers, although the Cadre devoted time and energy to discussion of issues brought forward by students and parents. Authority devolved to the school site and the principal was willing to share power with the participants. Many professionals in the school were not willing to share that power with parents and students. The Cadre continued to devote the majority of its time to non-instructional issues, although a group of teachers led by the Cadre chairperson began to collaborate by sharing teaching techniques and planning workshops to promote professional growth for all the faculty. The school continued

to have a direct line to the superintendent via the Office of School-Based Management. The volume of activity peaked during this year of site-based management.

Table 3
Summary of Discussion and Decisions Made in Year Three

Major Theme	Description
Form Staff Improvement Network	- attempt to improve quality of instruction - produce faculty newsletter - plan workshops - voluntary classroom visitation
Update goals	- reassess original needs and goals - align new goals with improving instruction
Closed campus lunch	- respond to parent concern - collect data on parent opinion - seek funding for facilities and security
Re-evaluate governance process	- seek faculty input on makeup of Cadre - maintain existing structure
Improve working conditions	- revoke extra class waiver - replace copy machines
Expand peer evaluation	- select eight additional teachers for training

Year Four

Year Four was marked by changes in the district that affected the SBM program. The superintendent that pushed SBM/SDM as the prime initiative for the district moved to another city in 1990. His successor was well-respected in the county and had a long tenure in the system as a deputy superintendent. After only eight months on the job, this superintendent unexpectedly died of a heart attack. The school board selected a replacement with much less experience in the system. The new superintendent was more oriented toward centrally planned policy, curriculum development, and accountability than the former superintendent.

As long as I am superintendent, the principal is in charge. Just like I am the superintendent, ultimately I am in charge. So I hold principals very accountable. I think that good principals build a team, listen to other professionals in the building and don't necessarily pull rank all the time. (Interview 38, lines 202-210)

The change in leadership had an impact on the SBM/SDM program at Royal Palm, if for no other reason than its effect on participants' perceptions.

As long as it is in the hands of the superintendent, then if the superintendent changes--and that tends to be every two to five years--you are going to be going from one direction to another. That is frustrating for the people involved. (Interview 7, lines 483-490)

We have gotten more stuff sent down to us from the district and the region. Their version of shared decision-making is: "Here's the decision and we'll share it with you." (Interview 12, lines 1071-1075)

SBM/SDM schools were returned to the line authority of region superintendents.

Former structure	SBM structure	Current structure
four area offices with line authority	six region offices functioning as support staff	six region offices with line authority

Some respondents felt betrayed and others felt it impaired Royal Palm's ability to function as an SBM/SDM school.

When they put the region back in charge of the schools, they more or less killed SBM. Because if you had to explain yourself every step of the way, pretty soon it is too much of an effort. (Interview 28, lines 338-347)

We went from four area offices to six regions. Then...[the former superintendent] left the county and the administration changed. There was a feeling that we were just squashed. That whatever initiative we had was just squashed back under the bureaucracy. (Interview 11, lines 1493-1503)

In spite of district-level changes, the spirit of staff collaboration continued as the Professionalism Task Force assumed some of the projects begun by the SIN Committee. This group presented several workshops and produced six editions of a faculty newsletter. Attendance rosters show that participation in the workshops ranged from about six to 40 teachers, depending on the topic.

The Cadre addressed two instructional issues in Year Four. One centered on study hall and another dealt with the organization of the school day.

Teacher A expressed concern for the amount of students in study hall who should be enrolled in another academic class in that the ultimate goal at [Royal Palm] is academic. (Royal Palm Cadre Minutes, September 25, 1990)

The concern was referred to a task force, which gathered data and recommended that the study

hall courses be phased out. A scheduling proposal calling for extended periods on alternate days was presented to the Cadre. It was referred to the Curriculum Task Force and teachers were polled for their opinions. The reaction from the staff was generally negative. Some departments, such as science, music and foreign language supported the concept while others, such as English, math and social studies were strongly opposed. The Cadre rejected the proposal.

The Cadre made decisions about the student tardy policy, methods for dealing with students who cut class, and parking problems. Members began to express frustration over the decision-making process.

Teacher B asked all to reconsider the purpose of the Cadre.... She expressed concern that there was a definite need for clear philosophy and goals as well as a more defined purpose. She also noted a decline in attendance at the Task Force Meetings. (Royal Palm Cadre Minutes, March 12, 1991)

In fact, the SBM/SDM structure had been re-evaluated the previous school year. What appears to be missing is a re-evaluation of the goals set forth in the original concept (as the teacher suggested) or a definition of the parameters within which the Cadre could effectively make decisions. Without these guidelines, attempts to address instructional issues, such as the scheduling proposal, missed their mark and the process got bogged down in:

Stuff. Xerox paper. I mean stuff, just stupid stuff. Stuff that could have been decided by a principal in five minutes. (Interview 14, lines 171-173)

I don't think we have taken time from the organizational stuff to really address what would make a direct impact on the classroom. (Interview 16, lines 518-522)

Another participant spoke of the difficulty of keeping the group focused.

The [difficult] side is not allowing yourself to be diverted from the agenda. Not become involved in areas of concern that are important for people, but really are not going to have a major impact on the prime mission of the school, which is to serve the students. (Interview 5, lines 338-345)

People were still participating in the governance process, but dissatisfaction over the lack of connection between SBM/SDM and improving instruction was growing. Nagging doubts about their ability to use SBM/SDM to address instructional issues caused some participants to become disenchanted with shared decision-making.

Table 4
Summary of Discussion and Decisions Made in Year Four

Major Theme	Description
Plan staff development activities	- present inservice workshops - produce faculty newsletter
Discuss purpose of SBM/SDM	- vent frustration
Petition district on school concerns	- request change in calendar - give input on proposed budget cuts
Consider alternate schedule	- retain status quo
Improve mechanics for student discipline	- alter tardy policy - revise procedure for reporting students who cut class
Continue programs	- peer evaluators - minority affairs - budget process

Year Five

The fifth year was marked by two events that dramatically impacted the SBM/SDM process. The district cut back the number of periods in the school day from seven to six. Teachers previously taught five classes, with one planning period and an administrative duty period. With the six-period day, the administrative duty period was eliminated. Extra time was no longer available in the school day for staff development activities and other meetings. The level of participation fell during the fifth year. Secondly, a new principal was placed at the school in January.

The former principal announced that he had been asked to fill another administrative position in November of the fifth year. The Cadre reviewed district policy, which stated that two teachers selected by the faculty would serve on the interview committee. Two teacher representatives were selected to "represent our faculty in the interview process for our new principal" (Royal Palm Cadre Minutes, December 3, 1991). Participants fully expected that they would have a say in selecting their principal.

Within a week, the school was informed by the region superintendent that a new principal

had been selected by district personnel. No one from Royal Palm had been included in the process. A principal of another high school applied for the position and was not required to go through the interview process. Lateral transfers are approved by administrative staff in the central and region offices. Members of the SBM/SDM team at the school felt betrayed by the district administration.

Well, first of all, I don't believe that it [SBM/SDM] ever really existed here in the county.... One of the really telling parts is that every SBM Cadre felt that they were going to be involved in picking the administration in their school when it changed, and I don't think anybody really was. (Interview 12, lines 545-553)

The feelings of teachers and parents about the way school-based management/shared decision-making functions under the new administration are strong and varied. Perceptions about the principal's commitment to the process affect respondents' willingness to invest time and effort. Participation declined. Some respondents reported that the process took on much-needed direction, while others felt that the process was dying.

I think it [the shared decision-making process in this school] is almost dead. (Interview 2, lines 59-63)

We are experiencing a rejuvenation of the process. Last year we were concerned about the running of the school.... [This year] they started talking about the curriculum. There is a continuum for the SBM process that ranges from the administrative to the curricular. We are starting to focus on the curricular.... There is more enthusiasm here now. (Interview 12, lines 995-998 and 1067-1077)

The Cadre and the task forces have no input anymore. The decisions are made by the principal. We're right back to where we were before we started, with no input as to the way the school is run. (Interview 33, lines 9-14 and 20-30)

I think it has become less effective [in the past two years] because of the backing of the present administration. I think it has been clear from the beginning that they had little use for it. (Interview 3, lines 210-214)

The principals described their leadership styles and their approaches to SBM/SDM.

I personally see myself as someone who allows other people who are in the organization to have the freedom and independence to work and to carry on their task. I allow them to take on a lot of initiative, creativity and take some risks. I do not have a need to have everyone do what I as the leader want to be done. (Principal 1, lines 931-945)

I think my leadership style is sort of like my teaching style. I think I know more than the students or else I wouldn't be the teacher. I like to inform people of what is going on. I think I have a pretty good idea about how technical things

work. Sometimes I get impatient about reinventing the wheel.... I like to think of my style as being inclusive; getting people involved but also saving them time. (Principal 2, lines 964-986)

Respondents reported that the new principal took a more traditional, structured approach to leading the school.

He just seems to run everything.... He just likes to have the power. Other principals will let other people run the school, but he is the type where he is going to run it. He is just that way. (Interview 8, lines 167-174)

I feel that the administration doesn't really trust the Cadre to do the right thing. I think they are afraid.... If something goes wrong, the ultimate responsibility is on the principal. It takes an awful lot of trust to put yourself on the line like that with your school. (Interview 28, lines 304-312)

The philosophy and the management style of the leader strongly affects the willingness of people to engage in the shared decision-making process. There was new leadership at the district level in Year Four and new leadership at the school level in Year Five. The dominant belief of many participants was the new principal did not believe in shared decision-making and preferred to maintain control. Consequently, people were less willing to take the risk of making suggestions. Task forces became less active and fewer ideas were presented to the Cadre for consideration. Teachers began to retreat to more traditional roles, reversing the trend toward collaboration that was seen in the third and fourth years.

The parent representative from the Citizens' Advisory Council presented a report on homework to the Cadre. It presented data gathered in a survey of parents. Included in the results were concerns about the quality and quantity of homework, feedback given to students and parents by teachers, scoring procedures and lack of coordination among the academic disciplines (Adapted from the Homework Survey Report of the Royal Palm Feeder Pattern Advisory Council, October 1, 1991). The report was referred to a task force, which in turn referred it to the departments for study. Recommendations were made, the parent proposal was studied, but no action was taken. The status quo remained in place. There is no indication of follow-up by departments or the Cadre.

Three additional teachers were selected to become peer evaluators, bringing the total number of teachers trained to 11. Peers completed 26% of the total number of official observations. The volume of ideas presented to the Cadre dropped sharply as people responded to the pressures of less time and the insecurity of new leadership. Cadre meetings were scheduled once every three weeks instead of every two weeks.

Table 5
Summary of Discussion and Decisions Made in Year Five

Major Theme	Description
Expand Peer Observation	- train three more teachers
Respond to district level changes	- reduce number and frequency of meetings - adjust to new principal
Continue budget process	- develop contingency budget
Consider parent concerns	- discuss results of homework survey
Address working conditions	- review procedure for reporting class cuts - approve form for schedule changes

Year Six

Two external forces influenced the SBM/SDM project during year six, Hurricane Andrew and the state legislature. The eye of the hurricane passed a few mile south of the school a week before school was to open. The school functioned as a hurricane shelter and the opening of school was delayed two weeks. The principal's secretary reported that 34 (37%) of the teachers were left without homes. Nearly all the homes within the school boundary were damaged. Student enrollment dropped 13% (274 students) as families relocated while their homes were being repaired. Those who remained lived under stressful conditions.

Respondents reported that both teachers and students were struggling to make it through the year. Many students moved away and did not return to the school. Teachers were trying to rebuild homes and maintain a sense of normalcy in school. Task force meetings took a back seat to meetings with insurance adjusters and contractors.

Blueprint 2000, Florida's response to the current goal-centered approach to educational reform, was passed by the state legislature and went into effect for Royal Palm in year six of SBM/SDM. The legislation specifies high goals for the schools while it provides local schools and districts flexibility to achieve the goals in their own way. Each school in the state was required to form a school advisory council composed of teachers, students, parents, and other citizens who are representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school. The legislation specifies the make-up of every council and charges them with conducting a comprehensive needs assessment at the school site, and developing, implementing, and

evaluating a school improvement plan designed to meet those needs.

It is interesting that the Blueprint 2000 legislation was based on components of the Dade County SBM/SDM pilot, but when the legislation was enacted, schools already operating with a shared decision-making council were also required to form a school improvement committee, which duplicated the existing governance structure. Royal Palm complied by setting up another council that met the state requirements.

The principal drew up a set of procedures for developing the budget and presented it to the Cadre for approval. The guidelines included steps for individual departments to follow, and excluded non-department heads from voting in the budget committee. A few staff members objected, voicing the opinion that the SBM/SDM process at Royal Palm is based on the principles of openness and inclusion and that the proposed committee structure was exclusionary, contradicting the founding principles of openness and inclusion. The guidelines passed. The Cadre voted to rescind the elected status of department heads, but the faculty rejected that proposal.

The focus of school-based management/shared decision-making narrowed. Non-functioning task forces were eliminated in an effort to streamline the SBM/SDM structure. Some faculty viewed this as a downgrading or dismantling of SBM/SDM, while others saw it as providing direction for the process. Many people simply did not have time to devote to meetings because they were in the process of rebuilding homes after Hurricane Andrew. In addition, the new principal assumed the prerogative for decision-making in many areas.

The major themes of Year Six show that the re-centralization of authority was reflected in the governance process at the school site. Fewer people were involved in the process and the focus narrowed. A new player entered the arena as the state legislature required the school to address state-wide goals and form another school advisory council. At the beginning of SBM/SDM, the district superintendent gave authority to SBM/SDM schools, provided visible support and removed them from the constraints of the district bureaucracy. In successive years, the effectiveness of Royal Palm's SBM/SDM process eroded as authority was assumed by others: by the district under the auspices of the new superintendent, then by the new principal, and in Year Six, by the state.

Table 6
Summary of Discussion and Decisions Made in Year Six

Major Theme	Description
Revise governance process	- limit membership of budget committee - streamline task forces - reduce Cadre meetings to once monthly - re-evaluate elected status of department head
Assess curricular needs	- embark on technology project - write grants for computers and staff development
Revise existing procedures	- discuss testing schedule - design plan for students to make-up tests

The First Semester of Year Seven

The researcher completed the collection of data at the close of the first semester in January, 1994. The report on Year Seven includes the SBM/SDM activities through this time. The Cadre met three times during the first semester of the school year. Very few decisions were actually made by the Cadre at these meetings. The most striking feature of the minutes from Year Seven is the nature of the meetings. In many instances, the Cadre appears to be functioning in an advisory mode as opposed to a decision-making mode. Careful reading reveals that the meetings functioned more as a clearing-point for dissemination and discussion of information than as a forum for decision-making. More initiatives come from the administration, or at least have strong administrative input.

Information was presented on the activities of the curriculum committee, which was working to develop training for the staff in the use of computers and to write a grant that would allow the school to purchase hardware. The group approved the semester exam schedule and developed a new schedule for departmental testing days. They voted to distribute the attendance bulletin later in the day and agreed to participate in this research project. The Cadre made a total of seven decisions.

Table 7
Summary of Discussion and Decisions Made in Year Seven

Major Theme	Description
Continue technology project	- apply for technology grant - present workshop on computers - select software package for school network
Revise existing procedures	- alter testing schedule - distribute attendance bulletin later in day

Visual Portrayal of the Context and Content of SBM/SDM at Royal Palm Senior High

The display on page 29 uses a time line to show events and reform efforts during seven years of school-based management/shared decision-making at Royal Palm Senior High School.

The first layer locates major state and national reform efforts on the time line. There were numerous benchmarks in school reform during those seven years. Only those that strongly influenced the evolution of SBM/SDM at Royal Palm are included in the graphic. The Carnegie report, A Nation Prepared, was widely read by policy-makers in the district and by participants at the school who designed the SBM/SDM structure. The Governor's Summit on Education led to America 2000, which in turn led to Blueprint 2000, the state's version of school reform for the final decade of the century.

The second layer shows events in the district context that participants identified as having an impact on the SBM/SDM process at the school. This includes the initiation of the first SBM/SDM pilot, changes in leadership, and changes in the district structure. The third layer shows critical events in the school community which affected the way in SBM/SDM was implemented. The bottom layer shows the volume of ideas that were presented for consideration by the Cadre at Royal Palm as well as the content of the decisions. By following the time line, the reader can see how all the events fit together. The school is a part of a complex web that includes events, popular ideas and policy. An event in any portion of that web affects all the other areas.

The visual illuminates the importance of leadership and stability. The process was most effective in Years Three and Four, when the culture of the school began to turn toward collaborative work. It is difficult to know if SBM/SDM would have continued to mature, and if the participants would have figured out a way to use the process to alter teaching and instruction as

they so strongly desired, had the leadership remained stable. Events in the context, including the changes in superintendents during Year Four, had a negative impact on the school's governance project. Events in the school, such as the elimination of the professional duty period and the changing of principals, crippled the program further. Hurricane Andrew dealt another major blow in Year Five. The SBM/SDM process continues to function, but as the graphic and the narrative data show, it functions on a nominal level. One respondent thanked the researcher for conducting the study and stated that "changes and time weakened the structure of SBM/SDM and what is left is a rewarding memory" (Interview 2, in correspondence to researcher, February 23, 1994).

How Participants Define and Conceptualize SBM/SDM

The respondents at Royal Palm Senior High described school-based management/shared decision-making in terms of their experience as a participant or an observer of the process. They uniformly expressed the view that the theory, or shared decision-making model, and the practice of SBM at the school diverged. Most felt that in reality, the Cadre deferred to the wishes of the administration: that the structure of influence did not change radically from what it had been under the former system of governance. Positive effects included increased collegiality and a feeling of ownership, which in many cases engendered a true desire to improve. A negative opinion shared by nearly all respondents is that SBM/SDM has not affected students.

The researcher noticed two other items that participants did not verbalize. First, even though they continued to attend Cadre meetings, many respondents used the past tense when speaking of SBM/SDM. This may indicate these people feel the program is no longer operating in a meaningful way. Second, the descriptions centered around teachers, administration, and a few other individuals that sit on the Cadre. In their view, the school is the domain of professional educators and SBM/SDM is a program by school people, for school people.

CONTEXT AND CONTENT OF SBM/SDM AT ROYAL PALM SENIOR HIGH

State and National Reform Efforts

- Carnegie Forum:
A Nation Prepared

- Governors' Summit
on Education

- America 2000

- Blueprint 2000

District Context

- Superintendent Fernandez
Request for SBM/SDM proposals

- SBM/SDM schools removed from district authority line

- Superintendent Greer (Jan. - Mar.
1990)
Superintendent Bell (Mar. - Oct. 1990)

- Superintendent Visiedo (Oct. 25, 1990 -)
- Authority line re-instated at region office

Critical Events

- Royal Palm accepted as one of
32 SBM/SDM pilot schools

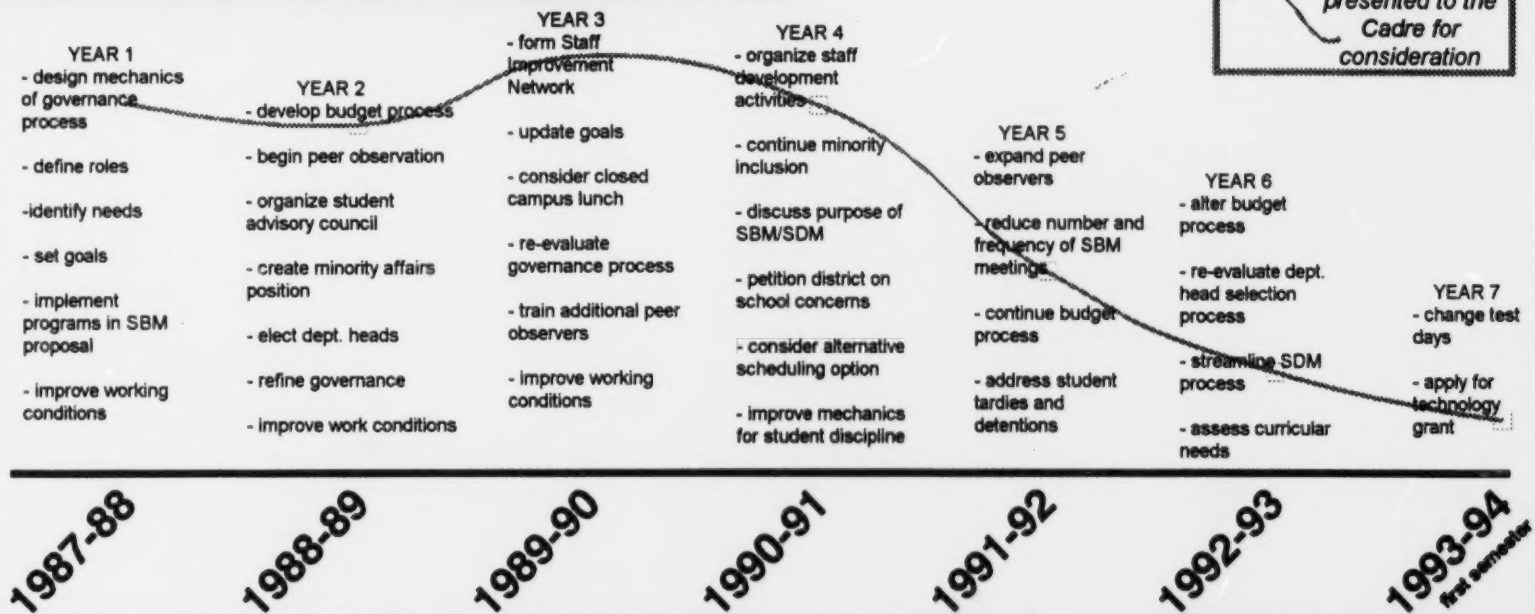
- New Principal assigned to school

- Elimination of Prof. Duty Period for teachers

- Ten year self-study at school

- Hurricane Andrew (Aug. 24, 1992)

Shared Decision-Making Process at Royal Palm Senior High volume and content of ideas presented to Cadre



How Beliefs About Authority Are Reflected in the SBM/SDM Process

The data indicate that most members of the Royal Palm community believe that authority should be distributed in a traditional manner. In the simplest terms: the principal should make decisions concerning the total school program, teachers maintain jurisdiction over the classroom, parents support through fund-raising activities and encouraging students to perform well, and students should take the initiative in extracurricular activities. These beliefs are reflected in the SBM/SDM process.

The nature of the issues the Cadre considered reflect participants' beliefs about their own empowerment. Respondents stated that they were disappointed in their inability to use the SBM/SDM process to make major changes that really impact the students. Instead, the Cadre got bogged down in governance issues, working conditions, and administrative trivia. The belief that the principal is responsible for the total program may have inhibited the initiative to undertake such changes. This is not to say that the principal was not willing to share power, or consider suggestions that arose through the shared decision-making process. It is possible, however, that participants simply did not conceive of making major changes because the dominant belief that the authority should reside with the principal was strong. Perhaps they simply did not envision such changes. Some expressed distrust and doubted that they had really been given the power to make such changes.

Controversial matters were nearly always referred to the Coordinating Council for a recommendation. The Coordinating Council is a smaller group that functions as the research arm of the Cadre. It is chaired by the Cadre chairperson. Both the principal and the assistant principal for curriculum sit on the Council. Council meetings are less formal than the Cadre and decisions are made by consensus. Members of the Council report there is a freer exchange of ideas and the administration's viewpoint is considered very seriously and that the administration has strong input into the recommendations developed by the Coordinating Council. By referring issues to the Council, the Cadre defers to the principal's influence. Recommendations of the Coordinating Council are rarely turned down by the Cadre.

Several members of the Cadre believed the Cadre watched the principal to see his reaction before casting a vote. Minutes of meetings indicate that even though a variety of opinions are voiced, the Cadre nearly always votes with the principal. One or two members may dissent, but the majority follow the principal's lead.

Parents addressed two major issues through the SBM/SDM process. One was the closing

of the campus for lunch. This was a complicated problem that required additional funding. There was some indication that a majority of the community would not support closed campus. Consequently, the issue was studied, but no action was taken. The Cadre's lack of action on this issue may show that they were willing to respectfully consider the parent request, but did not feel strongly enough to go to battle with other portions of the community and the central office over it. Parents also expressed concern over the quantity and quality of homework, and invested a great deal of time and effort to gather data from the community. It was clearly within the power of the Cadre to act in this area. The survey data were studied, but there was no follow-up action. The inaction aligns with the belief that teachers should control the curriculum.

Finally, the decision that the department should be represented on the Cadre by the department head shows an orientation toward a hierarchical structure. The Cadre had the option of developing a different system of representation, but felt the department head was in the strongest position to make informed decisions. This issue arose three different times, and each time the faculty chose the department head as the designated representative. This is congruent with the belief that authority should be distributed in a traditional way.

How Beliefs About Work are Reflected in the SBM/SDM Process

For purposes of this discussion, work is described as isolated or collaborative. Isolated patterns are characterized by working alone as individuals, using competition with others as the motivation to achieve. Collaborative work patterns are characterized by working together with others in groups, developing a spirit of community support as a motivating force.

Responses to questions about work patterns varied. A majority of teachers who actively participate in the SBM/SDM process said they use collaborative teaching strategies. Administrators, however, reported that collaborative work is not the dominant approach to learning. Students also reported that many teachers use isolated approaches, such as book work and work sheets, especially in the lower level classes. There is a parallel here: teachers who are comfortable with collaborative work styles are also the ones who participate in the collaborative process of shared decision-making.

Royal Palm is located in a community with a high socio-economic status where many parents work in professional occupations. Students expect to compete to get into a good college and parents expect their children to achieve. Teachers may find that competition in the classroom works well to motivate the majority of the students who are college-bound.

We have a student body that is highly motivated, highly challenged, and highly competitive. They will work. They will manipulate. They will do whatever they can to be top dog. (Interview 24, lines 436-440)

This observation is further supported by the concern that the PTSA and the Student Advisory Council expressed about the amount of cheating that goes on in the school. A spirit of individual competition can breed the belief that one should win at any price.

Faculty reported that they share ideas with other members of their academic department, but rarely collaborate with teachers in other disciplines. Several expressed the view that interdisciplinary cooperation is desirable, but that the organization of time in the school day inhibits communication with other teachers.

A majority of teacher participants on the Cadre believe in the value of collaborative work. Attempts were made to use SBM/SDM to foster a spirit of collaboration through school-based management. The very nature of the process opens up communication, which they viewed as the most positive outcome of SBM/SDM.

I saw communication on a professional level among the adults that I had not seen before. There was involvement and communication dealing with professionally-related issues. (Interview 5, lines 591-596)

You know in a high school you just don't go out of your department. You are stuck in it. You don't have time.... I think [SBM] made it a much closer knit faculty. (Interview 25, lines 71-79)

The collaborative activity peaked around the third and fourth years of SBM/SDM, when a core group of teachers formed the Staff Improvement Network and developed activities to foster professional collaboration. Teachers who believed in the value of collaborative work used SBM/SDM to work together and to encourage others to do so. The faculty as a whole, however, resisted change.

Examination of the data shows that when participants felt that they no longer had the support of the district and school leadership; when they had to deal with larger classes combined with less time for preparation and the disruption of personal lives in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, they retreated back to more familiar, isolated work patterns.

How Beliefs About the Role of the Learner Are Reflected in the SBM/SDM Process

The researcher did not observe classes. Teachers, administrators and students described the kinds of learning activities that take place in classes as well as the kinds of learning activities they believe are most effective. The approach to instruction is mixed, but respondents report that

the dominant mode of instruction is grounded in the mimetic⁶ tradition. Teachers dominate the learning process. Information on student achievement shows that the school has been successful with this approach. Most students are willing to accept a passive role, because they understand that if they meet the prescribed standards, they will get the grades they need to go on to college.

Because SBM/SDM is a governance process, and because participants at Royal Palm were not successful in using the process to change teaching practice, a direct examination of the decisions does little to reveal beliefs about the role of the learner. It is useful, however, to examine the role of the participants as learners. Participants in the school-based management/shared decision-making process experienced the transformative learning process. The district did not provide a clear set of procedures for implementing SBM/SDM, and the principal was willing to take the risk of allowing participants to find their own way. They had to discover SBM/SDM for themselves. At times, the process was painful, but those who participated wholeheartedly took ownership in the process. This may be why so many respondents expressed a great deal of frustration over their failure to use the process to change teaching practice and disappointment over their perception that the process was slipping away under new district and school leadership.

Participants constructed a working model where teachers and others participated in running the school, but they did not transfer what they learned to their classrooms. It is ironic that in the Cadre meetings, members never talked about how to apply shared decision-making in their classrooms; about how to allow their students to experience what they were experiencing as learners in the SDM process. They truly had a transformative learning experience, but they did not perceive the role of the learner as a pressing concern or one that merited public attention. The leadership at the school and district did not press the issue, or even open it up for examination. Perhaps the dominant belief about the role of the learner was so strong that participants did not see the parallels.

I think that was one of the things we tried to do over the years: to have the kinds of processes of SBM and decision-making and participation in the classroom, where it wasn't the teacher who tells the kids how to do it. It should be the kids discovering for themselves as I think we did as a group.... Hopefully, that is what the whole thing was about. But I don't think that piece ever happened. (Interview 18, lines 225-235 and 245-247)

⁶ In this tradition, learners are viewed as empty vessels to be filled with discrete skills and competencies. The teacher takes an active role and the learner is passive.

One respondent stated that even though change in teaching practice did not come about, participation in the SBM/SDM process engendered a desire to change teaching practice. The more innovative teachers became involved and SBM/SDM gave them a vehicle for discussion and efforts to change teaching practice. Teachers worked together in the Professionalism Task Force and the SIN Committee to organize workshops in cooperative learning and other teaching strategies.

There is an interesting parallel between the beliefs about the learner and participation in the SBM/SDM process. Respondents who felt that SBM/SDM was a great concept, who expressed a belief in the process, and who continued to be involved even after many disappointments, were also the ones who reported that they viewed learners as active participants in their classrooms. Those who resented going to meetings and who were not proponents of SBM/SDM tended to be the ones who were comfortable with teaching styles where students take a more passive role. The degree to which teachers are comfortable with discovering for themselves as active learners may determine how comfortable they are participating in a shared decision-making project. A teacher who served as chairperson of the Cadre made this observation:

Getting the faculty to try something new is similar to our problems as teachers in getting students actively involved in learning. Engaging the faculty [in the process of shared decision-making] seems even more difficult than engaging students in their own learning. The percentages engaged in this school seem similar. (Interview 7, note to researcher)

Most Royal Palm teachers are not comfortable actively discovering how to do something in a new way.

Conclusions

Restructuring requires a change in the organizational culture; a shift in the core beliefs and assumptions of members of an organization. In schools, the change takes place in three areas:

- 1) Distribution of Authority - the hierarchy is flattened to empower school site personnel, parents and students.
- 2) Work Patterns - shift from an isolated, competitive orientation to collaboration
- 3) Role of the Learner - from passive consumers to active constructors of knowledge

The philosophical underpinnings of SBM/SDM are consistent with the desired outcomes of restructuring.

The process of SBM/SDM can accelerate change in an organizational culture. It increases communication, the prime medium through which culture is transmitted. It can redistribute authority and foster collaborative work habits among professionals. It does not explicitly address the work habits of students or the role of the learner. The principal and other school leaders must guide the site council to address these issues. The manner in which the process evolves and the direction it takes is largely determined by the abilities and leadership style of the school principal and the district superintendent. SBM/SDM is a tool that leaders can use to reshape the organizational culture of the school and district. When used effectively, beliefs in the three key areas align with the dynamic patterns of schooling described above.

Royal Palm's early successes and subsequent failures provide some lessons for districts and schools planning to use SBM/SDM as a restructuring initiative.

- New roles should be clearly defined and articulated by participants at every level of the school and district organization, including parents and students.

School-based management/shared decision-making aims to restructure roles and relationships that have been in place for decades. Setting up a governance council does not, in and of itself, redistribute power and authority. Time needs to be devoted to redefining roles so participants understand how the new roles differ from current ones. Accountability structures should then be put in place that will reinforce those roles. For example, the principal's role should shift to a facilitator who builds alliances to accomplish goals. Part of the principals' job description and evaluation should focus on demonstrating those kinds of behaviors. In addition, staff at the central office and regional office need to understand changes in their own roles in relationship to the principal's new role. They should not expect an "on-the-spot decision" about an issue if the school functions under a shared decision-making model and the principal needs time to build consensus.

Parents and students at Royal Palm assumed peripheral roles. An open discussion of the scope of parental and student involvement at the school site, coupled with clear expectations from the district about the nature of the new roles, may have opened the door for more meaningful involvement. Parents and students need to be given authority and responsibility in curricular matters. One of the aims of restructuring is to create unique schools that are responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. Meaningful involvement of parents and students is necessary if this is to happen.

Staff at the district level must also accept new roles. When the school first began its SBM/SDM program, it was removed from the district hierarchy and given a direct line to an assistant superintendent who oversaw the SBM/SDM schools. This encouraged innovation. When the school was placed back into the district hierarchy, the weight of the bureaucracy squelched initiative in several ways. First, innovations required approval by several layers of administration, which increased the possibility of the idea being nixed before it was ever tried. Second, fewer ideas were proposed as participants perceived that the difficulty of fighting for approval to take a risk was simply not worth the effort. The existing system overrode the new system when innovative ideas arose that did not fit the expectations of the old system. Finally, the school was overwhelmed with demands generated by district staff. By the time they responded to those demands, people simply did not have the energy to be proactive in their own school. District staff needs to assume roles that support the schools' initiatives instead of generating their own initiatives. This is crucial if power and authority are to be shifted to the school site.

The superintendent needs to maintain a high profile of commitment to the shared governance project. The study school experienced early success as the superintendent pushed the concept of SBM/SDM and gave it high visibility. He designated a person to oversee the project and provide support to SBM/SDM schools, sending the message that it was important to the central office. Successive superintendents professed support for the program, but took actions that moved the district structure toward central control. This caused participants to feel uneasy as they perceived that their efforts were being undermined by lack of support from top echelons of the administration.

- The principal is a key figure in making SBM/SDM work at the school site. Principals need training in facilitative leadership. Principals' job descriptions and evaluation procedures should focus on demonstrating facilitative behaviors.

Participants need to feel that the principal has good faith in sharing some of the power vested in the position for trust to develop among those involved. Leadership at the school site must be congruent with the school's organizational philosophy. In addition to training and evaluation, the procedures for assigning principals to SBM/SDM schools is something which districts should examine closely. If the district chooses to have a mixture of SBM and non-SBM schools, then every effort should be made to match principals with a facilitative style to schools operating under school-based management. The principal who was assigned to the study site had

no previous experience running a school-based management/shared decision-making school and was comfortable using an authoritarian management style. He was willing to work with the new system, but did not have a clear understanding of how the SBM/SDM process functions or the role of the leader under such a system. It is not realistic to expect principals to assume a new operating style as they move from school to school.

The SDM council at the study site felt they should have had input in the principal selection process. Inclusion of one or two council members in the selection process may have eased the transition for the new principal and/or increased the possibility that the person selected felt comfortable with a facilitative role.

The principal needs to guide the SDM council to examine the professional practice at the school and provide data to support that study as they seek to identify ways to improve schooling. The principal can ensure that school-based initiatives are systematically evaluated, devise ways to extend or improve positive results, or to "cut the losses" if they prove to be ineffective.

- The philosophy of school-based management/shared decision-making needs to be infused throughout the district, so there is a common direction for the entire organization.

School-based management/shared decision-making is rooted in a management approach that focuses on decision processes and the sharing of power. This approach needs to be applied throughout the entire district structure, including the central offices. If a district intends to pursue school-based management/shared decision-making, then at the minimum, all the managers need to understand the theory that underpins the approach. Ideally, all the managers would believe in the efficacy of the approach. The entire district must embrace a consistent management philosophy and train leaders appropriately.

- The school-based management/shared decision-making process serves as a breeding ground for future leaders.

SBM/SDM creates opportunities within the school for teachers to gain leadership experience. This is evident at the school study site where three of the seven Cadre chairpersons have gone on to assume administrative positions in other schools. These future leaders will be comfortable operating in a collaborative situation. A consistent approach will, over time, produce a new generation of facilitative leaders.

- Cultural change takes time. Consistency over a period of years is needed for new beliefs to take root.

Continuity over a period of time is as important as achieving consistency throughout the entire district organization. Ideally, the superintendent should remain in the position long enough to for change to take root.⁷ In large urban districts where the superintendency turns over every three to five years, it is crucial for the school board to recognize the need to select superintendents that are believers in restructuring and in school-based management and the processes of shared decision-making. The board must assume a leadership role to insure that the district continues to move in the same direction.

- Participants need time and ongoing assistance to develop their shared decision-making process.

Participants in the SBM/SDM project at the study site identified the loss of the professional duty period as the event having the greatest negative impact on their decision-making project. They no longer had extra time in the school day to meet or to plan, and the remainder of their day was consumed with preparing lessons, grading student work, and teaching. The teachers' first concern was their classrooms. Participation in school based-management/shared decision-making was secondary. When time was provided, they participated willingly. When that time was no longer available, they were still willing to participate, but not at the expense of their class work. Fewer meetings took place and fewer ideas surfaced.

Many respondents commented on their lack of preparation for SBM/SDM. They spent a great deal of time working through processes they could have learned before initiating the project. Professional development opportunities need to be made available before the program begins and they need to be ongoing so people continue to grow in the process. For example, a facilitator could have guided the group when frustration over their inability to directly impact students surfaced in the form of complaints about the process. The systemic roots of the complaints could have been identified, and the group directed in a more productive direction.

⁷ Michael Fullan and other researchers have stated that five years or more are needed for changes to become institutionalized.

- A process for renewal needs to be built into the SBM/SDM structure, so goals and the process itself are continually improved.

A systematic approach to reviewing the SBM/SDM structure and process is essential if the system is to remain viable. Respondents at the school study site expressed concern that this was lacking in their model and, consequently, the shared decision-making council had become an elite group that no longer responded to the needs of the constituent groups whom they served. The concept of continuous improvement is not new: it is based on the work of J. Edward Deming and used by many successful businesses. Participants need to complete an annual review of the SBM/SDM process that includes an examination of the roles for all the players and the processes of representation. Districts need to provide facilitators for this process so it takes place in the context of the overall picture for the district as well as for the individual school site.

In addition, there was no systematic approach at the school study site for reviewing goals and monitoring the progress of specific initiatives. For example, the researcher experienced great difficulty obtaining longitudinal data that would indicate the progress made toward increasing minority involvement in advanced academics. The SDM council continued to provide release time for the coordinator of the minority affairs program without evaluating whether the goals of the program were being met. The annual review needs to include an assessment of progress toward goals that is based on a systematic analysis of data and follows progress as it relates to the overall mission of the school.

- Policy makers must tread a fine line between providing enough structure to ensure that decisions are student-centered and allowing participants to discover the process and set goals for themselves. Participation in the SBM/SDM process engenders ownership and commitment.

Respondents strongly identified with the SBM/SDM project at their school. They discovered the process for themselves because they were implementing a new concept and the district provided very few guidelines. Many expressed a keen sense of ownership and even those who were not proponents of SBM/SDM had strong feelings about what they perceived to be the positive and negative outcomes. It was evident they had an emotional investment in the successes and failures of the shared decision-making project. Participation in shared decision-making was a powerful experience which molded the beliefs of those involved. The researcher was struck by the sense of frustration and loss that many respondents expressed over the decline

of the program. This leads the researcher to believe that school-based management/shared decision-making has potential to generate lasting change. Participants truly felt accountable for the results of the project.

This study illuminated the human side of school restructuring. School policy affects the lives of teachers, parents, students, and administrators. One hopes that the intent of policy makers is to effect positive change. Unfortunately, school improvement efforts can be inchoate, hastily designed, quickly abandoned, or lacking a strong foundation in the research. These kinds of efforts breed cynicism and a jaded attitude on the part of those asked to implement them. They cause frustration, a sense of failure, and waste a great deal of energy and good will. They affect the daily lives of people who live in schools. Their legacy is a resistance to change and a belief among school people that if they resist long enough, the status quo will prevail. One respondent in this study stated that he should have been suspicious when SBM first came in, because he had been through "a lot of revolutions". This teacher, and many others at Royal Palm, have learned a lesson. They will be suspicious of future efforts to change school practice.

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Appendix A

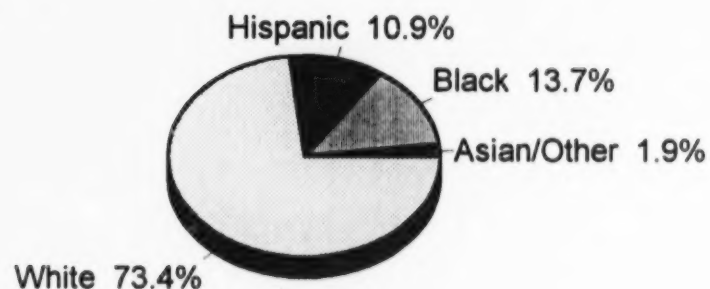
Results of the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire

The results of four administrations of the survey are presented below. A score of 2.1 or higher indicates a positive response. A score of 1.9 or lower is negative.

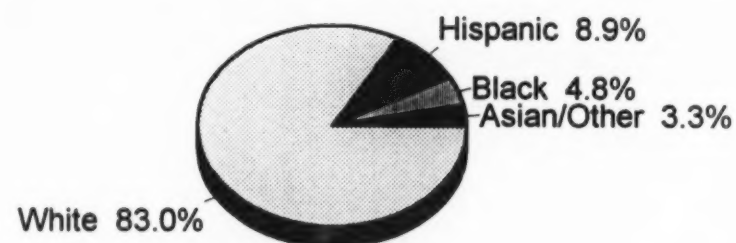
FACTORS	Sept-87	May-88	May-89	Nov-93
Teacher rapport with principal	3.29	3.06	3.24	2.76
Satisfaction with teaching	3.70	3.62	3.68	3.71
Rapport among teachers	3.02	2.84	3.22	3.00
Teacher load	3.18	2.87	2.95	3.09
Curriculum issues	3.10	3.14	3.51	3.09
Teacher status	2.58	2.63	2.80	2.96
Community support of education	3.48	3.23	3.52	3.52
School facilities/services	2.67	2.84	3.14	2.76
Community pressures	3.45	3.28	3.38	3.60

Minority Enrollment in Advanced Academics: 1987 and 1994

1987

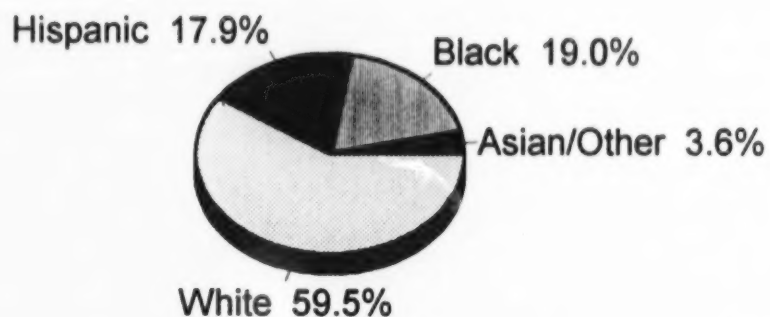


Percentage of Total Enrollment

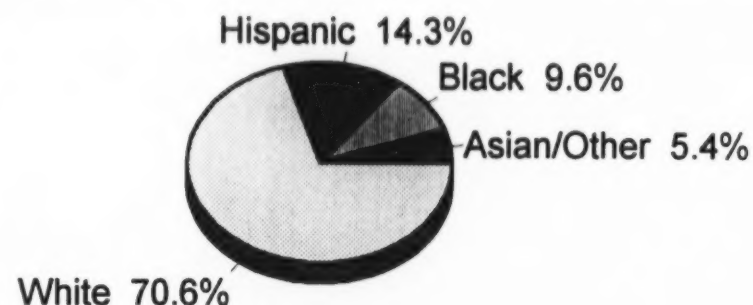


Percentage Enrolled in Advanced Academics

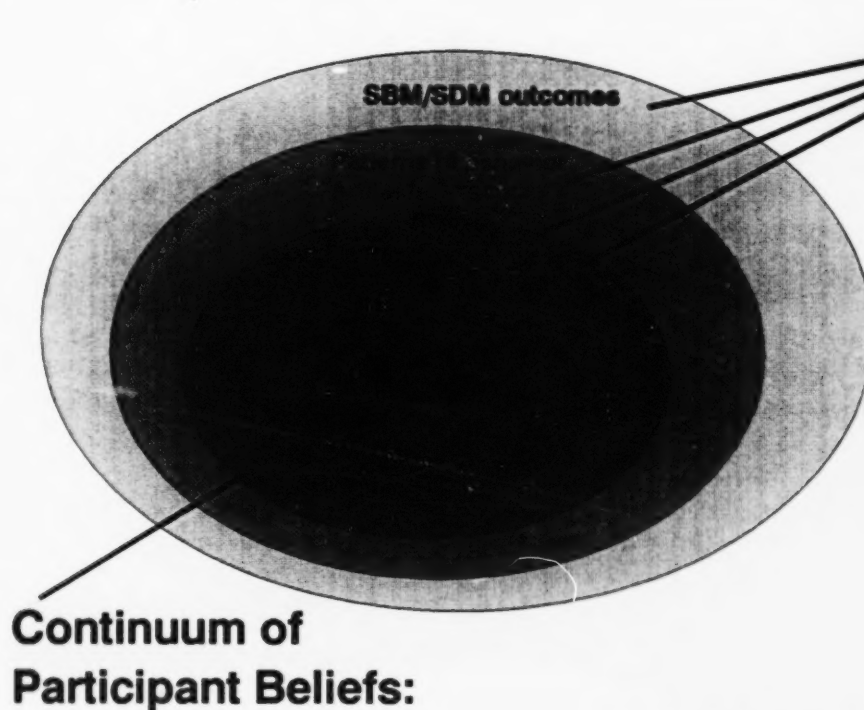
1994



Percentage of Total Enrollment



Percentage Enrolled in Advanced Academics



Know:	Work:	Authority:
1. staff development content	1. who collaborates	1. who is included
2. curricular changes	2. nature and content of collaboration	2. nature of inclusion
3. changes in assessment practices	3. communication process and content	3. roles assumed
4. changes in academic outcomes	4. climate of work place	4. emergent leadership
	5. changes in instruction	5. goal setting process and content
		6. who gained or lost influence
		7. exercise of decision making authority

Distribute Authority

Inefficacious
External Locus of Control

Empowerment
Internal Locus of Control

Working

Isolated
Bureaucratic Orientation

Collaborative
Community Orientation

Knowing

Mimetic
(Technical)

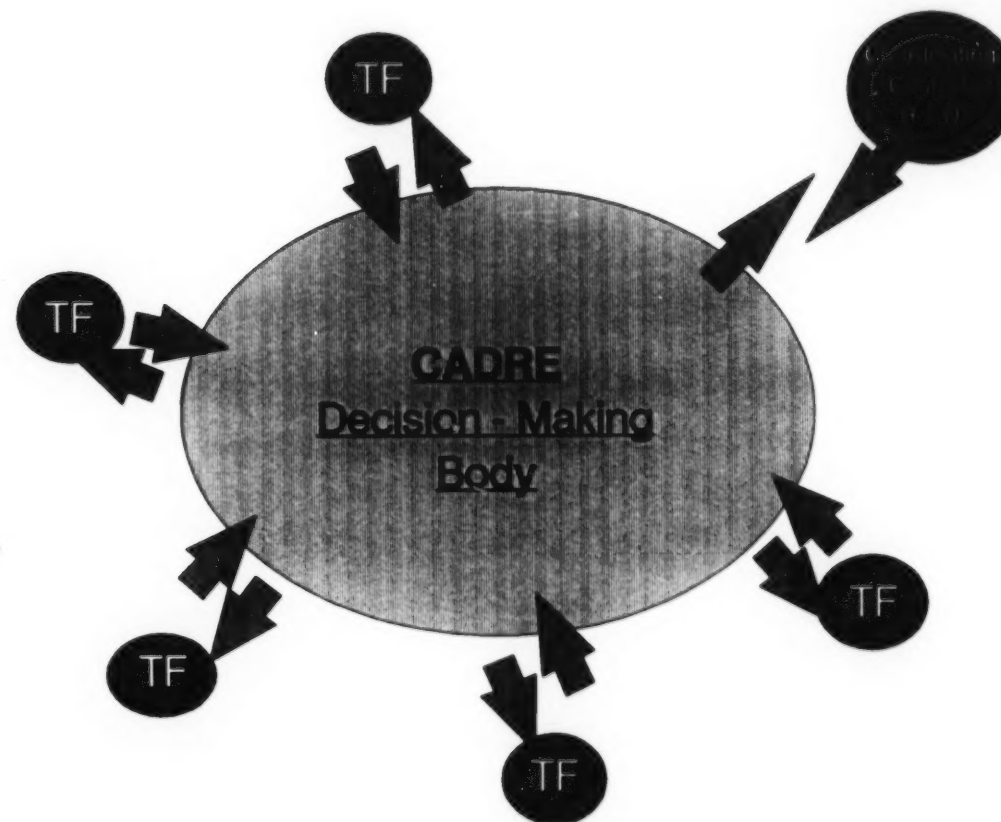
Transformative
(Constructivist)

Shared Decision-Making Model

Formal Organizational Structure

Decision Making Body - Cadre of 32 Members

13 Department Heads
Activities Director
Athletic Director
4 Elected Members at Large
2 Appointed M-at-L
PTSA Representative
Citizens Adv. Council Rep.
Cafeteria Staff Rep.
Clerical Staff Rep.
Custodial Staff Rep.
Student Government Rep.
3 Ass. Principals
Principal



Coordinating Council

Principal
AP for Curriculum
Activities Director
Union Steward
3 Teachers elected from Cadre
1 Teacher appointed by Principal
Cadre Chairperson
Executive Vice Chair

Task Forces:
Make
recommendations to
Cadre for Action

Budget
Curriculum
Peer Evaluators
Staff Assn
15 Departmental
Discipline
Professionalism
Staffing
Ad Hoc - Formed as needed

CONTEXT AND CONTENT OF SBM/SDM AT ROYAL PALM SENIOR HIGH

State and National Reform Efforts

- Carnegie Forum:
A Nation Prepared

- Governors' Summit
on Education

- America 2000

- Blueprint 2000

District Context

- Superintendent Fernandez
- Request for SBM/SDM proposals

- SBM/SDM schools removed from district authority line

- Superintendent Greer (Jan. - Mar.
1990)
- Superintendent Bell (Mar. - Oct. 1990)

- Superintendent Visiedo (Oct. 25, 1990 -)

- Authority line re-instated at region office

Critical Events

- Royal Palm accepted as one of
32 SBM/SDM pilot schools

- Ten year self-study at school

- New Principal assigned to school

- Elimination of Prof. Duty Period for teachers

- Hurricane Andrew (Aug. 24, 1992)

Shared Decision-Making Process at Royal Palm Senior High volume and content of ideas presented to Cadre

